

Message Text

SECRET

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, ET, UK
SUBJ: POSSIBLE UK INTEREST IN HAVING U.S. AS PROTECTING POWER
IN ETHIOPIA

REF: STATE 141745

1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR DAY INFORMALLY RAISED SAME SUBJECT WITH ME DURING GENERAL DISCUSSION JUNE 14 PREPARATORY TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR THREE-FOUR MONTH LEAVE IN UK, AND TOLD ME HE THOUGHT LONDON WOULD RAISE MATTER WITH WASHINGTON. SINCE HE WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY SOLICITING MY VIEWS, I REMAINED GENERALLY NON-COMMITTAL, SAYING THAT I WOULD WAIT FOR SUBJECT TO SURFACE THROUGH DEPT. I DID TELL HIM FRANKLY THAT, GIVEN OUR ANTICIPATED ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD OVER NEXT THREE-FOUR MONTHS AS RESULT RECENT EVENTS, I FELT IT WOULD BE MOST DIFFICULT INDEED FOR US TO TAKE ON PROTECTING POWER ROLE OVER THAT TIME FRAME, AND HE MAY WELL HAVE REPORTED THAT TO LONDON.

2. I ALSO INQUIRED WHY HMG WAS CONCERNED AT THIS TIME. GRANTED UK HAS NOW JOINED US AS OBJECT OF UNPLESANT PROPAGANDA, I WAS NOT SURE HOW THAT TRANSLATED INTO LIKELIHOOD THAT EPMG WOULD SHUT DOWN

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RELATIONS ENTIRELY, ANY MORE THAN HAD HAPPENED WITH US. DAY TOLD ME THAT HE HAD JUST BEEN CALLED IN BY ACTING EPMG FONMIN TO PROTEST ONCE MORE BRITISH MEDIA TREATMENT OF ETHIOPIA (THIS TIME TOW TV PROGRAMS), AND THAT HMG HAD SIMULTANEOUSLY RECEIVED NOT FROM EPMG EMBASSY IN LONDON ON SAME SUBJECT WHICH ADDED THAT MEDIA TREATMENT WAS NOT BEING HELPFUL TO UK-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

(LATER IN WEEK, DAY SAW MAJOR BERHANE BAYEH, CHAIRMAN OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF PMAC WHO TOOK MUCH SAME LINE ON ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION AS MENGISTU HAD WITH ME, AND WHO ALSO BROUGHT UP MEDIA PROBLEM). DAY NONETHELESS BELIEVES, AND I TEND TO AGREE, THAT MAIN PROBLEM IS ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (EDU) AND LOCATION OF ITS HEADQUARTERS IN LONDON.

3. WHETHER ALL THIS MIGHT LEAD TO RUPTURE OF UK-EPMG RELATIONS IS HARD TO GUESS. DESPITE VIRULENCE OF THEIR PROPAGANDA, ETHIOPIANS HAVE NOT YET TAKEN STEPS TO CLOSE DOWN ANY MISSION HERE, AND IT WOULD SEEM TO US THAT IF THEY CHOSE TO DO SO, THERE ARE AT LEAST FIVE OTHER BETTER CANDIDATES -- SUDAN, SOMALIA, EGYPT, AND SAUDI ARABIA, SOUTH KOREA FOR OTHER REASONS, AND POSSIBLY EVEN OURSELVES ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO INDICATIONS THEY INTEND MAKE ANY FURTHER MOVES IN OUR DIRECTION FOR THE PRESENT. NONETHELESS, SHOULD EPMG MOVE AGAINST BRITISH AND NOT SIMULTANEOUSLY AGAINST US, I WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT TAKING ON THEIR POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN ADDITION TO OUR OWN (AND I FEAR THIS WOULD HAPPEN BY EXTENSION). I WOULD CERTAINLY NOT FAVOR IT FOR NEAR TERM PURELY ON ADMINISTRATIVE GROUNDS. IDEA THAT BRITS MIGHT LEAVE BEHIND A KIND OF INTERESTS SECTION IS INTERESTING, BUT I WOULD NOT WISH BASE ANY PLANNING ON POSSIBILITY THAT EPMG WOULD ALLOW THEM TO DO SO.

4. APART FROM LIKELIHOOD THAT WE WOULD INHERIT BRITISH
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POLITICAL PROBLEMS, I CANNOT REALLY GUESS HOW EPMG MIGHT REACT. IF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS DO NOT WORSEN OVER NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS (PERHAPS END OF THIS YEAR), OR SHOULD THE IMPROVE SOME, ETHIOPIANS MIGHT NOT FIND ANY PARTICULAR PROBLEM IN CONSIDERING PROTECTING POWER ROLE TO BE PART OF "NORMAL" RELATIONSHIP THEY SEEM TO WANT. BUT THERE ARE TOO MANY UNKNOWNNS TO LOOK THAT FAR DOWN THE ROAD NOW. FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE, WHILE DUST IS STILL SETTLING DOWN, I WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE TO ASK THEM. PERHAPS IN FOUR-SIX MONTHS WE COULD LOOK AT SUBJECT AGAIN.

5. RE OTHER POWERS, FRG IS PROBABLY BEST BET BOTH IN POLITICAL TERMS AND BECAUSE MISSION IS LARGE ENOUGH TO HANDLE ROLE. DAY HAS ALREADY CONSIDERED DUTCH, BUT FEARS THEIR MISSION IS TOO SMALL. ITALIANS AND FRENCH ARE LARGE ENOUGH, BUT ITALIANS ARE PRE-OCCUPIED WITH OWN LARGE COMMUNITY AND FRENCH MAY HAVE THEIR OWN POLITICAL PROBLEMS. OTHER WESTERN MISSIONS, LIKE DUTCH,

ARE ALL VERY SMALL AS ARE MOT THIRD WORLD MISSIONS. SIZE
QUESTION MIGHT NOT BE IMPORTANT IF EPMG WOULD PERMIT SOME
BRITISH PERSONNEL TO REMAIN. IF THAT WERE CASE, DUTCH,
BELGIANS, SWEDES, SPANISH, CANADIANS, GREEKS ALL
MIGHT QUALIFY, PLUS A NUMBER OF THIRD WOLD COMMONWEALTH
COUNTRIES (E.G. INDIA OR MALAYSIA) IF HMG WANTED TO GO
THAT ROUTE. MY OWN RECOMMENDATIONS, HOWEVER, WOULD BE
FRG, ITALIANS, AND FRENCH IN THAT ORDER.
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